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RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0173  
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 1178  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3729  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0691  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2029  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0926  
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0149  
RUEHMI/USOFFICE FRC FT LAUDERDALE PRIORITY 3047  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
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RUCNMEM/EU MEM COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001207

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SCUL](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: NGO HIGHLIGHTS BRV'S USE OF ELECTORAL BLACKLISTS

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Classified By: Robert Downes, Political Counselor,  
for Reason 1.4(b).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) Opposition NGO Ciudadania Activa (Active Citizenry) produced the documentary "La Lista Tascon" ("The Tascon List"), a film that dramatically portrays the Venezuelan government's systematic persecution of persons who signed petitions against President Hugo Chavez in 2002-2004. The organization is preparing the English version of the documentary and hopes to premiere it soon in the United States. Ciudadania Activa (CA) officials believe the Tascon List, now called the Maisanta Program, will soon be integrated with tax and property registries, creating a super database of information, rumored to be managed by Cubans, that could be used to track many aspects of individuals' lives -- and ensure Bolivarian persecution of "counter-revolutionaries" and their family members. While CA is a small organization, it has demonstrated a rare talent for exposing Bolivarian foibles. End summary.

¶2. (C) Rodrigo Ayala, General Coordinator for Ciudadania Activa, told Poloff May 2 that his small organization was founded in January 2002 just as Venezuela was headed into a political crisis. Opposition leader Elias Santana began the group, but has dedicated increasingly more time to the electoral NGO Queremos Elegir ("We Want to Choose"). Ayala is a stock broker who splits his time between work and political activism. Ayala said the group participated in the Coordinadora Democratica, which oversaw the opposition's failed recall attempt in 2004, but did so in support of a constitutional solution to Venezuela's political crisis and not in support of a specific political party or candidate. Ayala admitted, however, that two of CA's directors, Carlos Oteyza and Maria Oteyza, are also working for Teodoro Petkoff's presidential campaign. CA's mission, Ayala said, is to promote citizen participation in politics and

strengthened democratic institutions, which Ayala said translates into training workshops and media presentations on Venezuelan politics.

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Documenting the Dictatorship  
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13. (C) CA has produced several documentaries, sometimes in partnership with other groups, about Venezuela's political situation. All have a markedly pro-opposition tilt. Subject matter has included a graphical depiction of deteriorating social conditions during the Hugo Chavez regime; a blow-by-blow of Chavez' infamous split-screen broadcast April 2002 coup attempt; and a catalog of the mass marches of 2002-2004. The newest documentary, "La Lista Tascon," ("The Tascon List") relates the persecution experienced by persons who signed the petitions in support of the constitutionally-accepted recall referendum process against Chavez. The film describes in detail how Fifth Republic Movement (MVR) Deputy Luis Tascon secured the names and identity numbers of millions of signers, with a request letter signed by Chavez, from the supposedly impartial National Electoral Council (CNE). Tascon then posted the data on his website, where it quickly became a ready reference for Chavistas in determining the loyalties of citizens, then victimizing those who did not support Chavez. Most hard-hitting in the documentary are the emotional testimonials of persons telling how they were fired from their jobs, often under humiliating circumstances. The documentary was recently submitted in support of several petitions to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights regarding the unjustified firings.

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Going Global

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14. (C) Ayala said an English-subtitled version of "The Tascon List" would soon be complete. He hoped to take the film on the road, arranging forums in universities in the United States and Europe to counter some of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's (BRV) international propaganda effort. Ayala said he was planning to go to Brussels (to the EU Commission); London (to present at Oxford University, where Chavez is rumored to be lobbying for an honorary degree); Prague; Germany (with the help of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation); and Madrid (to meet with Judge Baltazar Garzon).

In the United States, Ayala said the film had already been shown in Spanish at Princeton, Stanford, and Berkeley, but he hoped for a much wider viewership than just universities with the English version. While noting CA's policy not to accept any funds from the USG, Ayala did request support in "opening doors" with interested institutions in the United States.

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Programa Maisanta 2.0, Made In Havana?  
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15. (C) Ayala said that since producing the documentary he had received new information (much of it admittedly speculative) about the BRV's plans for deepening its use of the infamous political blacklist. As the documentary points out, the Tascon List in early 2006 was combined with lists of participants in the BRV's social missions and CNE voting records, creating a program, called Programa Maisanta (the Maisanta Program) that not only identified the political orientation of individuals, but also attempted to characterize the degree of their revolutionary dedication. (For example, someone who did not sign in the referendum -- apparently pro-Chavez -- but did not vote in the sparsely-attended 2005 legislative elections could still have his Bolivarian credentials questioned.)

¶6. (C) Ayala said the new rumors are that Programa Maisanta will soon be combined with the recently modified land and property registry and SENIAT tax records. (Note: Tax rules now require consumers to give name and identity numbers for most retail purchases.) Ayala recalled that Minister of Interior and Justice Jesse Chacon announced March 29 that a Cuban company, Copextel, S.A., would oversee the implementation of the new national identity system and the overhaul of the property registry. Ayala said he had heard rumors that this new super database to track citizen purchases, possessions, and political leanings would be based in Cuba.

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Comment  
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¶7. (C) Ciudadania Activa is not a power player even among the moribund opposition sector. It is illustrative, however, of what the "Venezuelan opposition" has become: boutique groups that often share members across different organizations. This group, however, has scored a hit with "La Lista Tascon" and leaves us thinking here that Luis Tascon and his cohorts ought to be classified as first-class human rights violators. We believe "opening doors" in the United States for CA's documentary is worthy undertaking for both the Embassy and the Department.

BROWNFIELD